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SUBJECT: CG DISCUSSES FOREIGN AFFAIRS WITH SAG MP SKOSANA

¶1. (SBU) On November 12, 2008 the CG, PolOff and PolAsst met with Moleeane Skosana, a member of the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), and one of three House Chairpersons of the National Assembly as well as a member of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs. Mr. Skosana has had a long parliamentary career and has been a member of parliament since 1994. In 1998 he was appointed Minister of Correctional Services by President Mandela and continued to serve in President Mbeki's Cabinet until 2004. In 2007, Skosana was appointed one of three House Chairpersons of the National Assembly supporting the Speaker of Parliament.

¶2. (SBU) As a member of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs, Skosana discussed some of the topics dealt with by the Committee. Although Zimbabwe is a key issue that is discussed within individual political parties, Skosana said it is not widely discussed within the national government. He indicated that the SAG is primarily concerned with upholding the international principles of non-interference and sovereignty. He feels that one of the reasons the SAG is soft on Zimbabwe is because it fears any intervention will be opening the door for other African nations to act in a similar manner against South Africa in the future should the need arise. He continued by saying the only solution to the Zimbabwe crises is to involve civil society in the matter.

¶3. (SBU) Mr. Skosana was also critical of the Southern African Development Communities (SADC) appointment of Thabo Mbeki as sole mediator in the Zimbabwe crisis. He felt mediation efforts should have been undertaken by all SADC countries with a joint plan to deal with Zimbabwe. He also stated that Mbeki was never going to be successful in resolving the Zimbabwe crisis since Mugabe, the elder statesman, views Mbeki as his junior and would, therefore, not take instructions from him. One of the most important matters confronting SADC is devising an acceptable exit strategy for Robert Mugabe and his cabinet, but Skosana also felt that the only possible solution for Zimbabwe is for the U.S. to become involved in the matter and hopes that President-elect Obama will intervene in Zimbabwe. Mr. Skosana also indicated that the SAG will not give aid to Zimbabwe without stringent conditions being met.

¶4. (SBU) Skosana indicated that South Africa was working closely with SADC to deploy more troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo. He said the SAG feels a particular responsibility towards the DRC as it initially brokered the peace deal in the region. Skosana also mentioned that South Africa was relying on the African Union and the United Nations to help resolve the situation in Sudan.

¶5. (SBU) When questioned about U.S.-SA relations, Skosana said he feels relations with the U.S. will strengthen following the election of President-elect Obama. He found it encouraging that Senator Obama expressed a desire to engage leaders in Cuba, other Latin American countries and the Middle East. Skosana said in the past SA-U.S. relations on an international political level were shaped more by the U.S. attitude to and treatment of other countries especially the Middle East, than by its treatment of SA. The Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs feels that the Bush Administration has done well with regards to aid for Africa, in fact far better than the Clinton Administration, but still feels that U.S. relations with the rest of

the world is the most important factor in furthering SA-U.S. relations. Skosana hopes that President-elect Obama will have a Qrelations. Skosana hopes that President-elect Obama will have a greater willingness to listen to the opinions of and engage with other nations on a more open level.

¶6. (SBU) Skosana said his party, the IFP, did not foresee any major loss in membership as a result of the new political party, which has broken away from the ruling ANC party. IFP members are mostly Zulu and based in the Kwa-Zulu/Natal province, a traditional Inkhata stronghold, and would, in all likelihood, remain that way. He said the IFP would not form any coalition before the elections, but did not rule out the possibility of a coalition with the new party after the election.